

John Randolph to Andrew Jackson, January 5, 1831, from Correspondence of Andrew Jackson. Edited by John Spencer Bassett.

JOHN RANDOLPH TO JACKSON.

London, January 5, 1831.

My dear Sir, Yesterday, I had the pleasure to receive your valued and most welcome letter of the 2d of December. It more than compensates me for "*the implacable malice of my enemies*". The storm of obloquy and calumny, which has been poured upon my defenceless head is, so far as I know, without precedent. It seems as if the assailants thought there was nothing too absurd, or preposterous, to be asserted of me. There are other besides publick reasons, which have made me particularly obnoxious to the Duumvirs, who lead the coalition forces; and I have no doubt that their caterers are well aware of the appetities of their masters. "If what they allege (or any part of it) be true, then am I unfit for my country; if false, (and of general belief) then is that country unfit for me". But no! it is not my country that brings, or credits, these monstrous allegations of the creatures of C. and W.¹ But let me dismiss them and the subject, on which I have already wasted too many words—forever! Of Mr. Van Buren's personal regard and good feeling towards me I have never entertained a doubt. On my part, I have cherished the kindest dispositions towards him, which have perhaps rendered me more sharp sighted to the difficulties of his position. My best wishes and regards attend him.

1 Probably intended for Clay and Webster.

It gives me pleasure to inform you that my health has so far improved that I confidently look back to a return to St. Petersburg as soon as the Baltic shall be open: unless

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indeed all hope of success in either of the objects of my mission shall be desperate. Events have been very untoward for us, The French Revolution, that of Belgium, the Cholera Morbus, but above all, the Polish insurrection. I do not consider that my own ill health, or absence from Russia, have had any ill effect upon our negotiation. Before I left St. Petersburg I had put the Imperial Ministry in full possession of all our views, and here, I am conveniently situated for communicating with them as well as with my own Government. I have found in Prince Lieven² not only an accomplished gentleman, but one who has won upon my esteem. His deportment towards me is so frank and cordial (to all he is courteous) and so unequivocally indicative of good opinion on his part, that I am sorry he is not charged with the conclusion of the Negotiation which I opened with him.

² For many years Russian ambassador in London.

I had read “the Message” in the Times Newspaper a few minutes before I received the official Copy. It is unnecessary for me to use the privilege which you so generously and kindly accord, but I cannot refrain from expressing my admiration of the manly and lofty spirit in which it is conceived, as well as the general correctness (in my humble judgement) of its views. There are points of dissent of which you are not unapprized: but Anti Tariff as I am, and ever shall be, I cannot overlook the glaring absurdity of those who oppose themselves to that measure as “unconstitutional”, while at the same time they defend the constitutionality of the Bank of the U. S. They belong to that class who confound Tyranny with Usurpation, as if that made any difference to the victim—“for it is not perhaps so much by the Assumption of unlawful powers, as by the unwise, or unwarrantable use of those which are most legal, that Governments oppose their true end and object”. Who doubts the *constitutionality* of the Corn Laws, that are starving the English labourers? Are they therefore more bound to submit to starvation?

Occupied as your time always is and especially during the sitting of Congress I feel as if I were indiscreetly intruding upon it. I cannot close this unreasonably long letter, however, without saying that it is not the least of my gratifications arising from the favourable change

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in my health, that it will enable me to comply with your wishes and to manifest my sense of your noble conduct towards me. . . .